



Date of Work Session: February 24, 2014

TOWN OF LEESBURG TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Subject: Leesburg Launch Pad

Staff Contacts: Deborah Parry, Department of Planning & Zoning
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Recommendation: That the Town Council endorse the Leesburg Launch Pad web tool and associated outreach efforts to business owners considering a location in Leesburg or looking to expand their current investment in the Town.

Issue: Should the Town Council endorse new outreach tools for business owners and operators considering a new or expanded presence in Leesburg.

Background: The Leesburg Launch Pad (www.leesburgva.gov/launchpad) is a web based tool providing a 'start here' information center for business new and existing businesses looking to open or expand in Leesburg. This tool was developed in partnership with the Economic Development, Finance, Planning & Zoning and Utilities Departments as a means of simplifying the process of opening or expanding a business in the Town. The tool takes information which already existed in other areas of the website and presents it in a concise and effective manner. Business owners can research locations, zoning regulations, land development legislative approval processes (if applicable), available business assistance resources, taxes and fees and submit questions to staff with just a few clicks of the mouse.

Development of the Leesburg Launch Pad included a period of beta testing during which input was sought from the Economic Development Commission, Planning Commission and various members of the Leesburg business and development community that are touch points for new and expanding businesses. Since the official launch earlier this month, staff has begun a targeted outreach and education campaign directed toward the business, development and real estate communities, which will continue over the next few weeks and months.

Looking into the future, the Leesburg Launch Pad is intended as a tool that will continue to grow and evolve over time. Additional functions will be added to customize the information to specific business uses and work is already underway to launch a home based version of the Leesburg Launch Pad.

Fiscal Impact: All of the work associated with the Leesburg Launch Pad was done in house with existing tools available to staff. Going forward, staff time will be needed to maintain and expand functions of this tool; however, there will be no significant impact to the overall work program.